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THE BEN GREET SHAKESPEARE

FOR YOUNG READERS AND AMATEUR PLAYERS

TITANIA

"What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed?"

822.33
M58

The Ben Greet Shakespeare

For Young Readers and Amateur Players

A Midsummer-Night's Dream

Garden City · · New York
Doubleday, Page & Company

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A FEW GENERAL RULES OR CUSTOMS OF ACTING

THE letters *R* and *L* indicate the position of players on the stage facing the audience. *R* 1, *L* 1 are the entrances nearest the front. *Go up* means from the audience; *go down* is toward the audience. *R. C* is the right side of the centre, — and so forth.

When the characters enter, the person speaking generally comes second.

Do not huddle together; do not stand in lines; and do not get in such angles that you cannot be seen by the sides of an audience.

Stand still — keep the leg nearest the audience back, gesticulate seldom and with the hand farthest from the audience. Do not point to your chest or heart when you say *I*, *my* and *mine*, nor to your neighbor when saying *thou*, *thy*, and *thine*, unless absolutely necessary.

Try to reverse the usual acting of the present day and eliminate the personal pronoun

as far as possible (Shakespeare does it all the time). Occasionally the pointing gesture is necessary — but seldom.

Do not try to say more than six words, or at most eight, in one breath. Careful punctuation and accent are harmonious and necessary. Whatever you do, sound the last two or three words of the line or sentence: dropping the voice is the worst fault of our best actors. Do not speak to your audience or at your audience, but with your fellow actors, remembering, of course, that you have invisible listeners, and that the last man in the house wants to hear and see.

Do not imitate our star actors. Try to be natural, spontaneous, and original. At the same time, keep control of yourself and your emotions. To appear to be, and not really to be the character you are acting, is, perhaps, the perfection of the art.

Don't fidget your hands and feet — forget them, and let them be where the good Lord has placed them.

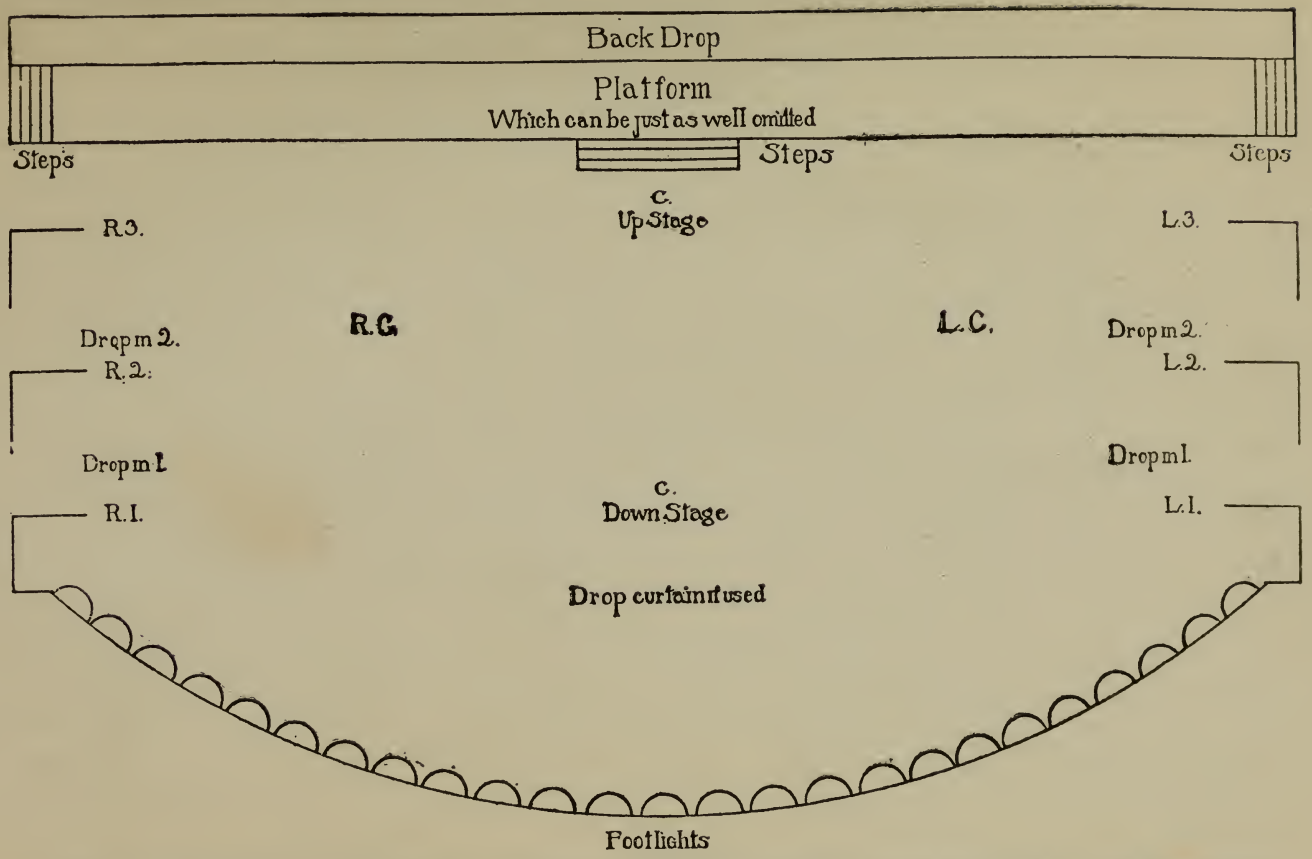
These few hints will be useful for all plays. I shall give more intimate notes as we go along.

The diagrams show the positions, entrances, etc.

The plays are cut to the length of an ordinary performance. Lines can be restored or further cut, if desirable, always remembering that a play given on what we will always call the Shakespeare stage should be given more rapidly, with no pauses between scenes or between entrances and exits, and with possibly only one intermission (of perhaps five minutes), as near as possible halfway through; and most of the plays can be acted in their entirety in about three hours, some of them in much less time — one or two of them take much more. If we cannot quite reduce ours to the happy medium of two hours, we must get as near it as possible. It is better to send your friends away wanting more, than to have them go home yawning! This is a word to the wise.

As to stage setting, it can be done in lots of ways: with scenery, or with screens, or curtains, or in the open air. Strange as it may appear, the plays of Shakespeare are equally effective whichever way we may choose to give them. I imagine most good plays will bear that test.

Remember that Shakespeare is the most perfect English. Do not imitate some of those professors, especially teachers of what is called Elocution and Expression, if by any chance they happen to pronounce it in up-to-date American or cockney British, or tell you it was conceived in any other brogue, accent, or pronunciation than the purest of pure English. There are a few mistakes in his plays, and some printer's errors, about which volumes have been written. Study the humanity, the heart, the English of Shakespeare, as of the Bible — those two wonderful Books of the same generation — the one splendidly revised and perfected by many scholars, the other produced in a state of nature and yet almost perfect — study them, my young friends, inwardly digest your Bible and outwardly demonstrate your Shakespeare: you will then start in life pretty well equipped.



The space between the footlights and drop or folding curtain can be reduced to any dimension.

AN INTRODUCTION

I SAW my first play at school when I was eight years old. It was one of Shakespeare's. A lot of little boys and girls of all ages and sizes were there, also many of our parents and our big brothers and sisters. Since that time, over forty years ago, I have loved Shakespeare, and I know most of my schoolfellows and friends have, too. I believe if children could see all the plays, and act all the plays written by this wonderful man, William Shakespeare, there would be more joy in the world and more gratitude for the wonderful gift of books and literature.

I have been fortunate enough to see some of his plays acted by quite young folks, and every time have been impressed by the remarkable understanding and grip they have had of the first meanings of his mind and actions. Therefore, I set about trying to arrange some of these wonderful plays so that my young friends could act them with the help of others or even by

themselves. I shall keep to the scenes for the most part as Shakespeare wrote them, but occasionally we will alter the sequence of a scene to avoid drawing our curtains too often. The long speeches I shall reduce, except a few of the very familiar ones. By this means I can promise you the delightful "two hours' traffic of the stage" which is mentioned by Shakespeare himself, in describing about the time it took to act a play, in the days when all our ancestors lived closer together, and must often have seen the plays acted by the great man and his companies of players.

Therefore, my little Phil, my two Peggys and Billy, Nancy and Emley, Emily, Arthur and Anson, Floyd, Walter, the Irvings, Imogen, Sanger and the Howes, and Paul; Karl, Maria and Fannie of Oberammergau, and heaps and heaps of other kids I can't remember to enumerate — I have endeavoured to put some of these plays into easy acting form for you; and if you want to hear of some more, and our publishers think so, too — well, I'll try to think of some others that are also suitable for you.

BEN GREET.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, *duke of Athens.*
EGEUS, *father to Hermia.*
LYSANDER, *betrothed to Hermia.*
DEMETRIUS, *once suitor to Helena, now in love with Hermia.*
PHILOSTRATE, *master of the revels to Theseus.*

HIPPOLYTA, *queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.*
HERMIA, *daughter to Egeus, betrothed to Lysander.*
HELENA, *in love with Demetrius.*

QUINCE, *a carpenter,*
BOTTOM, *a weaver,*
FLUTE, *a bellows-mender.*
SNOUT, *a tinker.*
SNUG, *a joiner.*
STARVELING, *a tailor.*
Performing in the interlude the parts of PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBE, WALL, LION, MOONSHINE.

OBERON, *king of the fairies.*
TITANIA, *queen of the fairies.*
PUCK, *or Robin Goodfellow.*
PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, } *fairies.*
Other fairies attending their King and Queen.
Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

⌒ Means "pause"

NOTE

Although there is only one way of speaking this wonderful play, there are many manners of producing it, but the mere working machinery for the play is much the same for all, the Elizabethan manner, as it was done at the Globe Theatre and at the court functions of Shakespeare's time.

There are three other ways:

(*a*) *In the open air.*

(*b*) *With a simple but artistic setting.*

(*c*) *With all the pomp and circumstance of the modern public's requirements.*

In giving you these impressions of it I try to place myself in the place of a play producer, and I talk to you as if I were endeavouring to help young actors and actresses, whether professionals or amateurs. To the old ones I am silent; they either know too much — or nothing.

In the theatre the characters would be discovered.

[1]*About six attendants and four soldiers.*

[2]*Hippolyta seated R.*

[3]*Pronounce it with'ring; the "e" is sometimes silent in verse.*

[4]*This rhythm is a guide for nearly all the play. It is "iambic jingle" and is easily and naturally delivered. Ten feet — five short, five long.*

ACT I

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of* THESEUS.

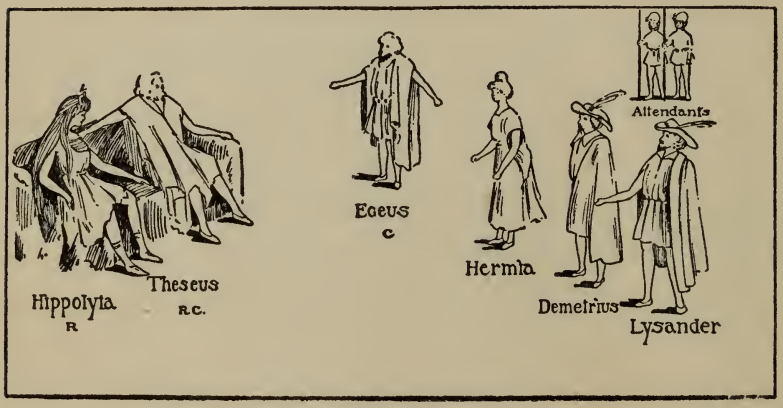
Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, *and* Attendants.[1]

The. C. Now, fair Hippolyta,[2] our nùptial hoùr
Draws òn apacè; four hàppy dàys bring ìn
Anòther moòn; but, Ò, methìnks, how slòw
This òld moon wànes! she lìngers my desirès,
Like tò a stèp-dame or a dòwagèr
Long wìthering[3] oùt a yoùng man's rèvenuè.[4]

Hip. R C. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

The. Go, Philostrate. (*He is up L C.*)
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;

[1]*They all salute with the right hand raised. The scene should be a plain cloth or drop of an Athenian courtyard, with a cut drop of three or four columns about halfway up the stage — a seat R C. In open air this scene is generally omitted. In the Elizabethan theatre or in a curtained stage it can be acted with same positions*



[2]*She is at his L.*
[3]*He comes forward L C.*
[4]*Lysander is extreme L.*

Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp.
[*Exit Philostrate L U.*
(*Turning to her*) Hippolyta (*sits*) I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and* DEMETRIUS *up L.*[1]

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned Duke[1]!

The. Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?

Ege. C. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.[2]
Stand forth, Demetrius.[3] My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander[4]; and, my gracious Duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child:
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious Duke,

[1]*Seizes her by the wrist.*

[2]*She goes forward C ready to kneel to Theseus R C.*

[3]*Kneels C a little below the seat.*

[4]*A gesture of appeal from Hermia.*

Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine,[1] I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
(*meaning Demetrius*)
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

The. What say you, Hermia?[2] be advis'd, fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

Her. C. So is Lysander.

The. R C. In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

Her.[3] I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts,
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

The. Either to die the death or to abjure
For ever the society of men.[4]

[1]*Hermia goes up L C and weeps.*
[2]*Crosses to him L C.*
[3]*Crosses to C.*

Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon —
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship —
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.[1]

Dem L C. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

Lys. L. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

Ege. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.[2]

Lys.[3] I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,

[1]*Hermia goes toward Theseus up stage making sign of acquiescence.*

[2]*Demetrius goes down L Egeus to L C.*

[3]*Egeus goes down L preparing to follow, they go up to L C Lysander get up R.*

[4]*She goes down L C.*

[5]*They go off up C to R.*

Demetrius and Egeus follow, Hermia makes an appeal to Egeus; who rejects her. She then goes to seat dejected. Lysander looks off up C to R after the retreating procession. Slight pause; then the dialogue

I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia[1]:
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head[2],
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

The. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;

[*general movement*]

But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus;[3] you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia,[4] look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up —
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta:[5]

Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*

Lys. L C. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?

[1]*Be careful of accents and scanning.*

[2]*Goes up C to see if they are alone. Then goes down.*

[3]*The word revenue is generally read in Shakespeare with the accent on the second syllable as here.*

[4]*Hermia rises.*

[5]*Goes to him, embracing him.*

How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

Her R C (*on seat*). Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

Lys. Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The coùrse of trùe love nèver dìd run smòoth;

Her. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,[1]
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

Lys.[2] *C.* A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of greàt revenùe,[3] ànd she hàth no chìld:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee[4];
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me then[5],
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;

[1]*He kisses her hand and goes up toward L.*

And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Her. R C. My good Lysander!
I swear, to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever woman spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love.[1] Look, here comes Helena. [*Hermia crosses to R C.*

Enter HELENA *up L going to C.*

Her. God speed fair Helena! whither away?

Hel. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves you fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air.
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
O teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

[1]*Crosses to Lysander up L C.*
[2]*Helena R C, Lysander L C, Hermia C.*

Her. R C. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Hel. C. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Hel. O that my prayers could such affection move!

Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

[*Crossing to R.*

Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

Hel. None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

Her.[1] Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Lys. L C. Helena,[2] to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the wat'ry glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lover's flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I

[1]*Kisses her on forehead.*
[2]*Goes up C with Lysander.*
[3]*Embraces her.*
[4]*She watches them off, then sits R.*

Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;[1]
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander:[2] we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

Lys. I will, my Hermia.[3]

[*Exit Hermia up R.*

Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you![4]

[*Exit. L U.*

Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:

[*Sitting R C.*

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he often is beguil'd.
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,

[1]*She rises and goes up C.*

If music be used in this play it is difficult to find anything so appropriate as that of Mendelssohn.

[2]*Producing scroll from wallet.*

[3]*Reads.*

He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:[1]
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.
[*Exit.* *Running off up L.*

SCENE II. *Athens.* QUINCE'S *house*

Enter QUINCE *L*, SNUG *R*, BOTTOM *R*, FLUTE *R*, SNOUT *L*, *and* STARVELING *L*.

Quin. L C. Is all our company here?

Bot. R C. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll[2] of every man's name which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and the Duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow on to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is,[3] *The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.*

[1]*Laughs; they all laugh.*

Snug R. Flute R C. Bottom C to R. Quince C to L. Snout L C. Starveling L. [*Sitting on a stool.*]

This scene is a "front" drop — that means, in the nearest groove to the footlights. It is a rough adobe, or wooden hut. In the open air it is played well in front of the stage. The mechanicals come on from various places, with various implements of their trade. [*Snout brings stool.*]

[2]*They huddle round him; he spreads them out.*

[3]*Holding hand up.*

[4]*Scratching head.*

[5]*Makes gesture of love.* (*On R of his chest!*)

[6]*All the other actors attend.*

[7]*Takes tragic paces to L.*

[8]*Takes tragic paces to R.*

[9]*They all applaud; Bottom bows.*

Bot.[1] A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll.[2] Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot.[3] Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot.[4] What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallantly for love.[5]

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms,[6] I will condole in some measure. To the rest. Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

"The raging rocks[7]
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus' car[8]
Shall shine from far
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.[9]"

[1]*Extravagant gesture of love. (On L of his chest!)*

[2]*Holding up hand.*

[3]*Very thick-headedly.*

[4]*Bottom objects and goes up R C.*

[5]*Snug, Quince and Snout go close to look at his beard, which they had not observed before. When he says "coming" they separate and laugh.*

[6]*Coming down C.*

[7]*Holds up hand. He is a feeble, deaf old man.*

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.[1] (*Crosses to R and up, acting.*)

Quin. C. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu.[2] Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flu.[3] What is Thisby? a wand'ring knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.[4]

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard[5] — coming! (*All laugh — he is very young.*)

Quin. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot.[6] An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. Listen, listen! "Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!"

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed. (*Goes up to R C.*)

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star.[7] Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

[1]*Holding up hand.*

[2]*Snug holds up hand.*

[3]*Very squeaky voice; quite the opposite type to a lion!*

[4]*Coming down C again.*

[5]*They all hush him up.*

[6]*Same business.*

Snout.[1] Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father. Snug, the joiner,[2] you, the lion's part; and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

Snug.[3] Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot.[4] Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the Duke say: "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

Quin. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son. (*Snug's squeaky voice is heard last.*)

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you[5] — as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar[6] — and 't were any nightingale.

[1]*Coaxing him.*

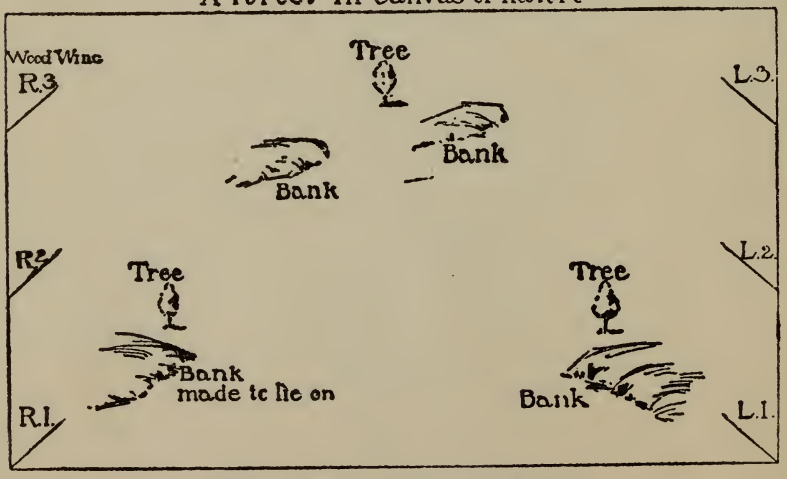
[2]*Hesitates a moment; his companions make one more appeal.*

[3]*Distributing scrolls of parchment except to Snug, who protests. Quince is very busy.*

[4]*Music of clown's march begins. They all go off the same places at which they entered, only studying hard their parts. Bottom being almost perfect already. He is the type of the overcertain man.*

The stage should be covered with dark brown, a few leaves thrown over it possibly. These "banks" or couches can be made of boxes or couches covered with green and slightly raised at one end. They can be padded a little for the comfort of those who have to lie on them — natural trees and shrubbery as much as possible.

A forest in canvas or nature



General Plan of Stage-Setting

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus;[1] (*Bottom objects*) for Pyramus is a sweet-fac'd man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot.[2] Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin.[3] But, masters, here are your parts; and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet;[4] and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Quin. At the Duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

[*Exeunt.*

In the theatre this scene should be dark, with moonlight.

Music of the Fairies March and Dance; Puck enters R with the Fairies.

Note.— The Fairies, if possible, should be played by children or small people. Shakespeare makes this so apparent. Their innocent, important babble about nothing, and their little dignified quarrels making them appear so self-satisfied is like our modern unconscious child, added to which the dramatic contrast gains enormously.

[1]*They skip up stage.*

ACT II

Enter, from one side, OBERON, *with his train of boys; from the other,* TITANIA, *with her train of girls.*

Obe. R. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.
Tita. L. What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence.[1]
(*Coming down*) Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steppe of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.
Obe. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,

[1]*So important are their little quarrels.*

By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which:
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;[1]
We are their parents and original.

Obe. R C. Do you amend it then; it lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

Tita. L C. Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.

[1]*An instance of the dropped vowel, and yet there are eleven feet; but four of them short words.*

[2]*She goes up C to L followed by her fairy train off L.*

[3]*Oberon follows up, then turns scornfully. Puck has been perched on a bank, or log R, watching with glee their quarrels. He jumps down and squats C, back to audience, looking up at Oberon C.*

His mother was a vot'ress of my order:[1]
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay?

Tita. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.

If you will patiently dance in our round
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not shun me, and I will spare your haunts,

Obe C.[2] Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[*Exit Titania with her train.*

Obe. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither.[3] Thou remember'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back

[1]*It is difficult to condense this beautiful speech.*

Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music?

Puck. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw, but thou could'st not.
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And thè imperìal vòtaress passed òn,[1]
In maìden mèditatìon, fàncy-freè.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little wèstern flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:

[1]*This speech delivers the plot and must be almost handed out to the audience, as many people lose its purport and wonder what the play is about.*

[2]*He goes up and becomes invisible by passing his drapery across his face.*

[3]*Demetrius goes down R followed by Helena, who remains L C.*

The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.

[*Exit up R, quick music.*

Obe. C. Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with *another herb*,[1]
I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;[2]
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA *following him (from up L).*

Dem.[3] I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood;
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

Hel. L C. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.

Dem. R C. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

Hel. L. And even for that do I love you the more.

Dem. R C. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not.

Hel. L C. Your virtue is my privilege: for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world:

Dem. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:

[*Goes up R.*

[1]*Approaching him she clings to him, he flings her off, she drops overcome to the ground.*

[2]*Rises, recovers herself and follows.*

[3]*Oberon, who has been watching up stage, comes down to L C. He has been invisible.*

[4]*Puck brings in a flower and gives it to Oberon.*

Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

[*Exits up R.*

Hel. (*on ground, C*). Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd and were not made to woo.[1]
I'll follow[2] thee and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well.

[*Exit R U.*

Obe.[3] Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK *up R.*

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Ay, there it is. (*Squatting on stage down C.*)

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.[4]
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,

[1]*Gives Puck a blossom*

[2]*Oberon goes up C.*

[3]*Oberon exits up L, Puck exits up R. If no music both exit up L.*

At this point the Scherzo is played.

Note.— When no movement is marked or change of place for the actors it means that any movement is not necessary. This comedy is after the Greek style; repose and limited movement and gesture were always observed. Nevertheless there is a great deal of action in the play.

At the end of the music, Lysander and Hermia enter.

With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometimes of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it,[1] and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove[2]—
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Puck. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt*[3]*—up L and R.*

Enter LYSANDER *and* HERMIA *from up R.*

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wand'ring in the wood;
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

[1]*Lysander is leading Hermia very gently. She is exhausted with her journey into the wild wood.*

[2]*She crosses to a bank left.*

[2]*Helena lies on bank down L.*

[2]*Lysander lies on bank up L C.*

[3]*Sees Lysander.*

Her. Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;[1]
For I upon this bank will rest my head.
So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend.
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
And then end life when I end loyalty![2]
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

Her.[3] With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd! [*They sleep on banks.*

Enter PUCK *quickly from R.*

Puck. C. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence — Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie

[1]*Sees Hermia, goes to her at bank L; crossing to back of L C bank and squeezing juice of flower on his eye.*

Near this lack-love, this kill-
courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw[1]
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wak'st, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon.

[*Exit up L.*

Enter DEMETRIUS (1) *and* HELENA (2), *running from R U.*

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

Dem. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go.

[*Exit L U.*

Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine

[1]*Going up C to L. She sees Lysander on bank. She screams with fright.*

[2]*He awakes with the Fairy Spell upon him. Sees Helena and begins to adore her.*

Make this spell apparent to the audience. Helena, not understanding, shrinks from him down toward R.

Note.— Be sure the final syllable to the names is well sounded: Hermià, not Hermier; Helenà, not Helener. Be careful of the accents on these lines, so often misread.

Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground![1]
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

Lys. (*Awakening.*)[2] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake. (*Rises.*)
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

Hel. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

Lys. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hèrmià but Hèlenà I lovè:
Who wìll not chànge a ràven fòr a dòve?
The wìll of màn is by his reàson swày'd;
And reàson sàys you àrè the wòrthier màid.

(Special Note. — *You are, not you-are.*)
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will

[1]*Approaches her.*
[2]*She crosses the stage as if to avoid him.*
[3]*She goes across R U and up to R U.*
[4]*Turns as if in disgust to the sleeping Hermia.*
[5]*Matter in parenthesis may be omitted.*

And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book.[1]

Hel.[2] Wherefore was I to this keen mockery
born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good tròth, you dò me wròng, good soòth you
dò,
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well:[3] perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
[*Exit up R.*

Lys. She sees not Hermia.[4] ⌒
Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
[5](For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!)

[1]*Exit up R, calling "Helend, Helend," as if disappearing into the wood. (Pause.)*

[2]*This speech is slight, not heavy tragedy; sinks back on the bank.*

[3]*She rises and goes round to L C bank to look for Lysander; finding him gone she is terrified.*

[4]*Pause and listen.*

[5]*She exits calling "Lysander, Lysander!" until out of hearing.*

And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helena and to be her knight.[1]

Her. (*Awaking.*) Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:[2]
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey. (*Rises.*)[3]
Lysander! what, remov'd? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No?[4] then I well perceive you are not nigh:
Either death or you I'll find immediately.[5]

[*Exit R U.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood; (or the scene can remain unchanged).*

Enter TITANIA, *with her train from up L.*

Tita. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,

In the theatre this can be a different scene, but the same is quite sufficient "The Fairy March" is played. Note (a.)

[1]*Throws herself on couch up L C.*

[2]*The fairies group around. Note (b.)*

Note (a). — There are several settings for this chorus, but that by Mendelssohn is the best; it is difficult, and requires fairly skilled singers.

Note (b). — The number of fairies must, of course, depend on existing circumstances; anything between four and twenty-four is adequate; small people if possible.

Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits.[1] Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

The Fairies *sing*[2]

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blindworms, do no wrong
Come not near our fairy queen.

Cho. Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So good night with lullaby.

Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

Cho. Philomel, with melody, etc.

A Fairy. Hence, away! now all is well
One aloof stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*

The refrain should be sung softly. It is a "lullaby." This voice should be off stage, the Fairies all listening; then at the end they should patter off very stealthily, as if afraid to wake the sleeping Queen. Puck kidnaps the sentinel.

Accompanying chords for this speech or "incantation."

Oberon should enter from up R before the Fairies actually trip off. He watches gleefully.

Note.— At this point, when the Queen is sleeping, the "Intermezzo" of Mendelssohn can be played, during which time the stage should become dark and the figure of Hermia groping through the forest is dimly seen; led on by Puck chuckling.

In the theatre this can end an act.

Creepers can be drawn down over the bower where Titania sleeps.

Enter OBERON, *and squeezes the flower on* TITANIA'S *eyelids.*

Obe. C. What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take,
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near.
[*Exit R L.*

[1]*They enter in same order as last scene. Quince comes first as if finding the rehearsing place, then quietly beckons the others, who appear severally rehearsing their parts.*

[2]*All groan.*

[3]*They are taken by surprise; scratch heads for answers.*

ACT III

SCENE I. *The wood.* TITANIA *lying asleep.*

Enter QUINCE *up L,* SNUG *R,* BOTTOM *R,* FLUTE *R,* SNOUT *L, and* STARVELING *L.*[1]

Bot. C. Are we all met?

Quin. L C. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the Duke.

Bot. C. Peter Quince —

Quin. L C. What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please.[2] First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?[3]

Snout. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

[1]*All relieved.*
[2]*All are greatly relieved and joyful.*
[3]*Very much afraid to speak.*
[4]*The lion should look very fierce.*
[5]*Snug watches and imitates Bottom's gesture*

Star. L. I believe we must have the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. C. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well.[1] Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not kill'd indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.[2]

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Snout.[3] Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. L. I fear it, I promise you.[4]

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in — God shield us! — a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to 't.

Snout. L C. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. C. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck: and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,[5] Ladies — or Fair

[1]*Bottom is addressing a large audience.*
[2]*Pointing to Snug.*
[3]*More groans; more scratching.*
[4]*(Happy thought!)*
[5]*Quince carries the scroll, or almanac.*
[5]*All dance with joy like children.*
[6]*All agree that this is a fine plan.*
[7]*More groans; more scratching heads.*

ladies,[1] I would wish you — or I would request you — or I would entreat you — not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing:[2] I am a man as other men are; and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things;[3] that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snout. L C. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?[4]

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.[5]

Bot. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in — at the casement (*pointing to moon*).

Quin. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine.[6] Then, there is another thing:[7] we must

[1]*This is too big an undertaking.*

[2]*All dreadfully depressed.*

[3]*Great expectations!*

[4]*After scratching brains, he has a great idea!*

[5]*Holds two fingers in two sides of a triangle.*

[6]*All again delighted.*

[7]*They all sit. Bottom up L C near, if not on, Titania's bank. Quince, Snout, and Starveling L, Snug and Flute R. All studying hard.*

have a wall in the great chamber for Pyramus and Thisbe, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.[1]

Snout. L C. You can never bring in a wall.[2] What say you, Bottom?[3]

Bot.[4] Some man or other must present Wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus,[5] and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper.[6]

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.[7]

Enter PUCK *behind from R.*

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. L. Speak, Pyramus. Thisbe, stand forth.

[1]*Rises, goes down pompously, then forgets his part.*

[2]*Puck mysteriously leads him off up R.*

Note.— The humour and charm of this scene of the rehearsal is the simplicity and unconsciousness of it all. They are rough, simple fellows, not "all-star" comedians.

[3]*Chuckles and goes off after Bottom.*

[4]*Flute is heavy and dull-witted too. In deep voice, then alters to a shrill squeak.*

Bot.[1] *R C.* "Thisbe, the flowers of odious savours sweet," —

Quin. Odours, odours. (*Crosses to show scroll.*)

Bot. ——"odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear.
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
(*Making contrary actions.*)
And by and by I will to thee appear."[2]

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here.[3]

[*Exit up R roaring with laughter.*

Flu. C. Must I speak now?

Quin. L C. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

Flu.[4] *C.* "Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb."

Quin. L. "Ninus' tomb," man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to

[1]*Bottom's voice should "mehaw," something like a donkey.*

[2]*At the sound they all look up, stare, and gradually realize what they are seeing. It must be seen gradually or it is too boisterous. They all scatter, Flute off R U, Snug R I, Quince shrieks and crosses over to R U, Snout and Starveling off L.*

[3]*He is quite astonished at their going.*

[4]*Snout creeps in on all fours.*

Bottom

Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is, "never tire."

Flu. O,— "As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire."

Re-enter PUCK, *and* BOTTOM *with an ass-head up R.*

Bot.[1] *C.* "If I were fair, Thisbe, I were only thine."

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted.
Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[*Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.*[2]

Bot. C.[3] Why do they run away? this is knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT *up L.*[4]

Snout. O Bottom, thou art chang'd! what do I see on thee?

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? (*Kicking out at him.*) [*Exit Snout up L.*

Re-enter QUINCE *up R.*

[1]*Quince is paralyzed with fear.*

[2]*He prides himself that he is "cock of the walk."*

[3]*A very simple chant like gravedigger's song. He crosses from L to R and back again, each time finishing down L, Titania slowly awakes and crosses to R C.*

[4]*At the word "angel" he lifts his ears.*

Note.— The mechanical head for Bottom is obtainable at any property-man store and is fairly inexpensive. It is better to have moving ears, eyes and mouth, but it must be used with discretion. Overclowning is out of place.

[5]*One ear moves.*

[6]*Other ear up; then drop both by degrees.*

[7]*Both ears, eyes, mouth, waggle.*

Quin.[1] Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit. R U.*

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.[2]

[*Sings.*

[3]The ousel cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with his little quill.—

Tita. [*Awaking.*] What angel[4] wakes me from my flow'ry bed? (*She sits up on bank, rubbing her eyes. If the bower is hidden by foliage it rustles, then is opened by Titania.*)

Bot. [*Sings.*] The Finch, the sparrow and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;—

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:[5]
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;[6]
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.[7]

[1]*Titania is ecstatic.*
[2]*The Donkey laughs.*
[3]*Ears move with joy.*

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays; the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion. (*Crosses to R.*)

Tita.[1] *L C.* Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. R C. Not so, neither:[2] but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

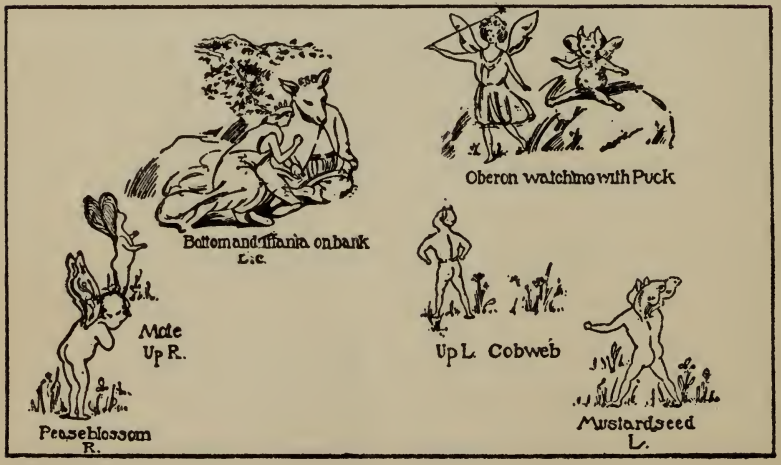
Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate:
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee,[3] therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep:
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustard-seed! (*They go up to bank L C.*)

Peaseblossom

[1]*He begins to dance like an airy spirit; they come from each side.*

[2]*All kneel.*

[3]*They all rise and keep bobbing to the music.*



Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, *and* MUSTARDSEED.[1]

Peas. Ready. *From L, X to R.*

Cob. And I. *From R, X to L.*

Moth. And I. *From L, X to R.*

Mus. And I. *From R, X to L.*

All. Where shall we go?[2]

Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

Peas. Hail, mortal![3]

Cob. Hail!

Moth. Hail!

Mus. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worship's mercy, heartily: I beseech your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

Peas. Peaseblossom.

Bot. I pray you commend me to Mistress Squash your mother, and to Master Peascod,

Moth

[1]*Music; they all rise.*

[2]*The "mehaws" from Bottom.*

[3]*They all dance off very quietly up R.*

There can be a short interval here.

In theatres this can be Scene I of Part 2. It is a good plan to divide this comedy in two, with one or two musical interludes.

your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustardseed.

Bot. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house; I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.[1]

Tita. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

The moon methinks looks with a wat'ry eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.[2]
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.[3]

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood, or the same.*

Enter OBERON *from L, laughing.*

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awak'd;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK, *from R U.*

[1]*Doubling up with laughter.*
[2]*He imitates the mock tragedy manner of Bottom.*
[3]*Chuckling.*
[4]*Laughing.*

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.[1]
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake:
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nowl I fixed on his head:[2]
Anon his Thisby must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. (*Strutting.*)
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania wak'd and straightway lov'd an ass.[3]

Obe.[4] This falls out better than I could devise.

But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

Puck. I took him sleeping,— that is finish'd too,—
And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

Enter HERMIA *and* DEMETRIUS *up L.*

Obe. Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

Puck. This is the woman, but not this the man.

Dem. L C. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

Her. R C. Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia?
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

[1]*She goes up to R U.*

[2]*Puck steps forward and puts a spell on Demetrius so that he cannot follow. He gradually is led by Puck to bank L C, where he sleeps. Puck follows to above bank L C; chuckles as Demetrius sleeps.*

Dem. L C. You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood;
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

Her. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefore?

Her. A privilege never to see me more.[1]
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

[*Exit R U.*

Dem.[2] There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe.

[*Lies down and sleeps; Puck chuckles.*]

Obe. C. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

[1]*Puck jumps up stage; exits L U.*

[2]*Music.*

[3]*Incantation music. Oberon squeezes purple flower on the eyes.*

[4]*Chuckles.*

Puck.[1] I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

[*Exit.*[2]

Obe.[3] *L C.* Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK, *from L U.*

Puck. L C. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Obe. R C. Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake,

Puck. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.[4]

[1]*Lysander R, Demetrius C, Helena L.*
[2]*Goes to take hold of her.*
[3]*She quickly crosses to C as if to avoid him.*

Enter LYSANDER *and* HELENA, *from up L.*

Lys. L C. Why should you think that I
should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?
Hel. R C. These vows are Hermia's. Will
you give her o'er?
Lys. L C. I had no judgment when to her
I swore.
Hel. R C. Nor none, in my mind, now you
give her o'er. (*X to L.*)
Lys. (*X* to *R.*) Demetrius loves her, and he
loves not you.
Dem. C to L. [*Awaking.*] O Helen, goddess,
nymph, perfect, divine![1]
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, let me kiss[2]
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!
Hel.[3] O spite! O hell! I see you all are
bent
To set against me for your merriment:

[1]*Goes up to L weeping.*

[2]*Helen is up L C, mildy protesting.*

[3]*Helen is still L C. He also protests.*

[4]*Lysander goes R, just before Hermia enters.*

[5]*She comes as far R U, sees Lysander R, and rushes into his arms.*

If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes.[1]

Lys. R C. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,[2]
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

Dem. L C. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,[3]
There to remain.

Lys. R. (*Crosses to C.*) Helen, it is not so.

Dem. L C. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,[4]
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA *running from R U.*[5]

[1]*He puts her aside to R, and crosses up C to Helena, who is up L C.*

[2]*Hermia R, Lysander R C, Helena C, Demetrius L C.*

Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

Lys. R C. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

Her. R C. What love could press Lysander from my side?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,[1]

Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Then all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The (*to Hermia R*) hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

Her. R. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

Hel. X to C. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! (*crosses to her at R*) most ungrateful maid![2]
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd
To bait me with this foul derision?

[1]*Turns to go off up L.*
[2]*Catches her wrist and stops her from going.*
[3]*Kneels R C.*
[4]*Kneels L C.*
[5]*Both rise.*
[6]*Seizing hold of Lysander up L C.*

And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

Her. R. I understand not what you mean by this.

Hel. R C. Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.[1]

Lys. L C. Stay, gentle Helena;[2] hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!
Helen, I love thee,[3] by my life I do: (*Madly.*)
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Dem. L C. I say I love thee more than he can do.[4] (*Most angrily.*)

Lys. R C. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

Dem. L. Quick, come![5] (*Tremendous vigour.*)

Her. (*Crosses to L C.*) Lysander, whereto tends all this?[6] (*This is really tragic.*)

[1]*Throwing her off down R.*

Note.—Of course all this is tragedy to the four lovers. It may be comedy to the audience.

[2]*Turns to Helena who is still up L.*

[3]*They meet up L C and go off fighting. At their exit Helena makes as if to cross L to C to go off. She is stopped by Hermia at C, who forces her to the ground by the wrists.*

Lys. R C. Away, you Ethiope! Out tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence![1]
Her. R. Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me — O, the gods forbid! —
In earnest, shall I say?
Lys. R C. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee,[2] and love Helena.
Now follow if thou darest to try who's right or thine or mine in Helena.
Dem. Nay follow. I'll go with thee cheek by jowl.[3]
Her. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stol'n my love's heart from him?
Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.

[1]*Helena rises.*

[2]*She runs across stage and off up R; Hermia follows her off.*

[3]*Oberon and Puck have been watching the scene and come down to C.*

I evermore did love you, Hermia.
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back
And follow you no further: let me go:

Her. Why, get you gone[1] who is 't that hinders you?

Hel. I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away.[2]

[*Exit.*

Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say.[2]

[*Exit.*

[3]*Obe. C.* This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Puck. R. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garment he had on?

[1]*Chuckles.*

[2]*Giving him another blossom.*

[3]*Puck strides up and down stage, from R to L and L to R — several times.*

* *As Puck works the spell of fog, the stage becomes dark. Put out all lights except perhaps a small red glimmer upon Puck. Steam could also be used to represent fog. This is effective with lights upon it.*

And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.[1]

Obe. (*C*). Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog as black as Acheron,
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;[2]
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day.

[*Exit up L.*

Puck.[3] Up and down, up and down,*
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

[1]*Crosses to R.*

[2]*Puck imitates the voices.*

[3]*Crosses back to C off R.*

(*The Mendelssohn music is effective through all this business.*)

[4]*Crosses to R and flashes his sword.*

[5]*Crosses to L. Puck chuckles — off L.*

Re-enter LYSANDER, *from up L.*

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius?[1] speak thou now.

Puck. C. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?[2]

Lys. I will be with thee straight.[3]

Puck. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground.

[*Exit Lysander, as following the voice.*

Re-enter DEMETRIUS, *up at L.*

Dem. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak![4] In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

Puck. C. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defil'd
That draws a sword on thee.

Dem. Yea, art thou there?[5]

Puck. Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.

[*Exeunt off L. Puck chuckling, then returns.*

[1]*Crosses to C.*

[2]*Puck stops him here (C) and puts spell on him.*

[3]*He sinks on to bank at R L.*

[4]*Chuckles and jumps to R C.*

[5]*Puck puts spell on him and he sinks on bank R. Puck chuckles, then sees Helena approaching from L.*

Re-enter LYSANDER, *from up R.*

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.[1]
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;[2]
That fallen am I in the dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle day![3]
For if but once thou show me thy gray light,
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite.
[*Sleeps.*

Re-enter PUCK *and* DEMETRIUS, *up R.*

Puck. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

Dem. C. Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot.
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

Puck. Come hither; I am here.[4]

Dem. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way.[5] Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.

[1]*Puck leads her by signs and passes to bank R U. Puck chuckles.*

[2]*Seeing her at R U.*

Note.— The women have their draperies over their heads, and cover their faces when they lie on the banks.

The wearing of Greek and Roman draperies is an art and must be very carefully rehearsed. I recommend people playing in classical plays to rehearse in the costumes.

[3]*Chuckles. Puck leads her across to bank L C.*

[4]*Puck chuckles.*

[5]*Music.*

[6]*Puck stands C and says this incantation then goes to bank L C.*

Puck

By day's approach look to be visited.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Re-enter HELENA, *L U.*

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:[1]
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[*Lies down and sleeps on bank R U.*

Puck. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:[2]
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.[3]

Re-enter HERMIA *up R.*

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down and sleeps on bank L C.*[4]

Puck.[5] On the ground[6]

[1]*Puck goes to C of stage.*

[2]*Chuckles and goes round to each of the sleepers with a blossom, releasing them from the Fairy Spell.*

At this point the beautiful "Nocturne" can be played. The stage being dark, light effects can be employed to represent the changes from night to day. Good — if well done.

In the theatre this can also be made an intermission — but not in open air.

If in theatre the curtain will rise upon the scene; the lovers are still sleeping — day has dawned.

[3]*There should be four or five attendants — more or less if convenient.*

[4]*Pronounced "vayward."*

Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.
[*Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eyes.*]
When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:[1]
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.[2] [*Exit.*

Enter THESEUS, *with* HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and train from L U.*[3]

The. C. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward[4] of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:

[1]*Attendant goes off up L.*

The attendants remain up L during scene.

Egeus goes around to each of the sleepers, commencing with Hermia at up L C, then to Lysander down L, then across to Demetrius R, and up behind banks, to Helena at R up C. Theseus and Hippolyta turn and go up C to watch.

Position of Characters at the Awakening

Despatch, I say, and find the forester.
[*Exit an attendant.*[1]
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.
Hip. L C. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.
The. But soft what nymphs are these.
Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep,
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.
The. C. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May, and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is this not the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

[1]*Philostrate signals off L U; the horns are sounded; a slight pause and the lovers awake by degrees, not all in the same manner. On perceiving the King, they all kneel at their places.*

[2]*They all stand.*

[3]*Lysander's speech is given as if he were only just realizing the situation.*

Ege. R C.[1] It is, my lord.[1]

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

[*Horns and shouts within. Lys., Dem., Hel., and Her., wake and start up.*

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. R. Pardon, my lord.

The. C. I pray you all stand up.[2]
I know you two are rival enemies:
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

Lys. R C.[3] My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think, — for truly would I speak,
And now do I bethink me, so it is, —
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law —

Ege. R C. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.

[1]*All keep their positions during this scene.*

[2]*Helena looks lovingly toward him. Hermia oward Lysander.*

[3]*Egeus goes down R.*

[4]*He bows to the Duke's decision.*

They would have stol'n away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

[1]*Dem. L.* My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
And I, in fury, hither follow'd them.
Fair Helena, in fancy, following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,[2]—
But by some power it is, — my love to Hermia,
Melted as doth the snow.
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena.

The. C. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus,[3] I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:[4]
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens; three and three,

[1]*All salute as they go off. Hermia makes appeal to Egeus who refuses to acknowledge her. Slight pause; music of "Nocturne" can be repeated here about thirty-six bars. The lovers hardly realize even now their situation: that they are awake.*

[2]*At this point there is a reconciliation of the men. Helena takes the hand of Demetrius, Hermia that of Lysander, the men cross to each other and clasp hands, then each turns to his lady, they embrace, finish the speech, and go off up L.*

We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.

[*Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and train up L.*[1]

Dem. R. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Her. L C. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When everything seems double.

Hel. R C. So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

Dem. R. Are you sure that we're awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The Duke was here, and bid us follow him?

Her. Yea; and my father.

Hel. And Hippolyta.

Lys. L. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

Dem. Why, then, we are awake:[2] let's follow him;
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

[*Exeunt.*

[1]*They dance as Titania seats Bottom on bank, L C. The Fairies kneel and stand around in same group as before, or varied, if desirable, by just reversing their sides.*

[2]*Peaseblossom rises and goes behind bank.*

[3]*Cobweb goes to a shrub and appears to catch a bee, gives it to Bottom who munches.*

[4]*Mustardseed gives his hand and keeps bobbing.*

Enter TITANIA *and* BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, *and other Fairies attending;* OBERON *behind unseen.*[1] *Titania from R U E.*

Tita. L C. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. C. Where's Peaseblossom?

Peas. R. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom.[2] Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

Cob. R C. Ready.

Bot. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipp'd humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag.[3]

Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

Mus. L. Ready.[4]

Bot. Give me your nief, Mounsieur Mustard-seed.[4] Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

[1]*Lifts ear.*
[2]*They all laugh.*
[3]*All laugh.*
[4]*Moth fills his mouth with grass or hay.*
[5]*Laughs again.*
[6]*Gives a yawn and sleeps.*

Mus. L. What's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch. (*They all scratch him and laugh.*)

Tita. C. What, wilt thou hear some music. my sweet love?

Bot. C. I have a reasonable good ear in music.[1] Let's have the tongs and the bones.[2] (*Laugh.*)

Tita. C. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats.[3] Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.[4] (*All laugh.*)

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek the squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.[5] But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.[6] (*General yawn.*)

[1]*The Fairies all go forward, also yawn and lie down in front of Bottom and Titania and sleep. Puck enters stealthily and chuckles. Oberon, who has been watching L C, goes down L.*

This scene is spoken in a sort of fairy-whisper.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in
my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be awhile away.[1]
So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

[*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK *from R.*

Obe. L C. [*Advancing.*] Welcome, good
Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours from this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her;
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That, he awaking when the other do,

[1]*Stands over bank, squeezing juice on her eye. Kisses her; then Titania wakes. She looks directly at Oberon, then runs into his arms, who is waiting down stage R C.*

[2]*Rushes to his arms.*

[3]*Bottom snores.*

[4]*Crosses to L C.*

[5]*He takes off head and runs or flies with it off R, chuckling. A few bars of "Nocturne."*

[6]*More music, all listen.*

May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
(*Music.*)
[*Touching her eye.*[1] *Squeezing juice on her eye.*]
Chords Be as thou wast wont to be;
" See as thou wast wont to see:
" Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
" Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.
Tita. L C. My Oberon![2] what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.
Obe. R C. There lies your love.
Tita. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe this visage now![3]
Obe. R C. Silence awhile. Robin, take off his head.
Tita. R C. Music, ho![4] music, such as charmeth sleep!
Puck.[5] *C.* Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.
Obe. R C. Sound, music! [*Still music.*][6] Come, my queen, take hands with me,

[1]*Music continues.*

[2]*They rush off like leaves before the wind. There can be a pretty Fairy dance here or it can be at the cue "Sound, music," and the scene can be continued after dance.*

Note.— Owing to a transposition of scenes the lines "these sleepers" is omitted, as it refers to the scene when they are all seen asleep — Fairies and mortals — at the same time.

[3]*After Fairies go off. Bottom snores, then starts, then wakes! He has no idea of his surroundings, but naturally thinks he is still rehearsing where he left off in the wood.*

[4]*Yawns and rises, calling for his fellows.*

Now thou and I are new in amity
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly
And bless it to all fair posterity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

Puck. Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.[1]

Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade:
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wand'ring moon.

Tita. Come, my lord, and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground

[*Exeunt.*[2]

Bot.[3] [*Awaking.*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, "Most fair Pyramus." Heigh-ho![4] Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stol'n hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go

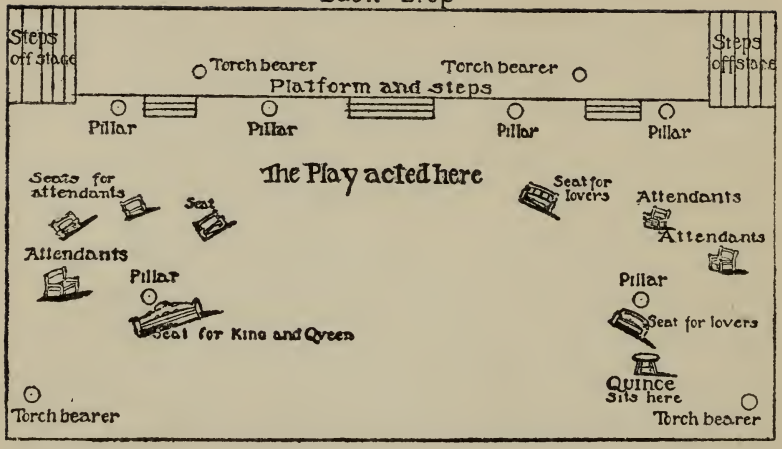
[1]*He can go off dancing, or rehearsing.*

Note.— The scene between Bottom and the mechanicals can be played here if desirable. It is not worth much and rather stops the action, which should now get to a conclusion. A short interval here if desirable, or let the march be played through.

In theatre the characters would be discovered.

about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was — and methought I had — but man is but a patch'd fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.[1]

[*Exit.*



General Plan of the Stage-setting

In open air they enter.

[1]*Let every one be in white, very little colour. Hippolyta is seated about R C. Theseus stands by her at R C. Attendants grouped all around on terraces, steps, etc. Philostrate is up L, Egeus is up R.*

Note.— Give the idea for this scene of a beautiful palace with steps looking out over the city, or the first scene can be used again.

It is night and the lighting should be as by torches held by attendants; or in braziers, lamps, etc. Any of these adjuncts are effective.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of* THESEUS

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, *and* Attendants.[1]

Hip. 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

[1]*Philostrate goes C as if introducing the lovers.*

[2]*They come from up L.*

[3]*All salute.*

[4]*The lovers stand up L C.*

Lysander and Hermia a little to front, they eventually sit L.

Demetrius and Helena sit L C.

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to
heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images
And grows to something of great constancy;[1]
But, howsoever, strange and admirable. (*Laughter is heard off L.*)

The. Here comes the lovers, full of joy and
mirth.[2]

Enter LYSANDER, (1) DEMETRIUS, (2) HERMIA, (1)
and HELENA. (2)

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts![3]

Lys. L C. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed![4]

The. Come now; what masques, what dances
shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?

[1]*Philostrate comes from L to below Theseus, saluting.*

[2]*A paper or scroll.*

[3]*Philostrate says this as if he were amused at the scene he had witnessed. It is not an oratorical contest. Every one listens with the expectation of enjoyment.*

Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.[1]

Phil. C. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. R C. There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first. [*Giving a paper.*[2]

The. "A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; a very tragical mirth."

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Phil.[3] *C.* A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:

[1]*Philostrate goes up and beckons the players off L.*

[2]*The lovers seat themselves on benches L C and L.*

[3]*A flourish of trumpets as each actor enters.*

[4]*Quince "bobs" as the peasants did.*

Note.— The performance of this tragedy is intended by the actors to be serious, the more serious they are the more humourous it becomes to their audiences. There should be very little horseplay that is not in keeping with the situation, and hardly any alteration of the text.

[5]*All these quaint short sentences should be preserved.*

And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

The. What are they that do play it?

Phil. C. Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now,
And now have toil'd their unbreath'd memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in:[1] and take your places, ladies.[2]

[*Philostrate goes up L.*

PHILOSTRATE *reappears.*

Phil. So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

The. Let him approach.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter QUINCE *for the Prologue.*[3]

Pro.[4] If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend[5]

[1]*They all applaud, and as Quince goes up C they have a good laugh.*

[2]*This dialogue can be reduced if desirable.* ( )

[3]*Quince being manager, he and Philostrate summon the various actors by going to steps, beckoning and being the general guides.*

Each actor as he comes on looks supremely humourous and bobs. He is thickly painted —; the wall is two boards worn, like a yoke.

But with good will. To show our simple skill
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.[1]

[2](*The.* This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he hast play'd on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered.) Who is next?[3]

Enter SNOUT *for* WALL.

Wall C.[3] In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,

[1]*He points to himself and "at stone." He hits the wall which has some of its dust lying on the surface.*

[2]*Loud trumpets till he is on C, Bottom is dressed in full armour and tries to bob; he forgets part, and Quince prompts him with all the Os.*

Note.— The characteristics of each actor:

Quince: Middle-aged and very fussy.

Bottom: Pompous, and self-confident; when he actually acts he becomes quite forlorn.

Snout: Very precise; spells out all the small words and emphasizes them.

Snug: Very timid always.

Flute: Fat, heavy, assuming a girl's squeak.

Starveling: Old, toothless, very matter-of-fact and dignified; can also be deaf.

That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam,[1] *this* roughcast and *this* stone[1] doth show
That I am that same wall; *the* truth is so:
And *this the* cranny *is*, right *and* sinister,
Through which *the* fearful lovers *are to* whisper.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

Enter BOTTOM *as* PYRAMUS *from L U.*[2]

The. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Pyr. C. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,

[1]*Peeps through.*

[2]*Hits the wall, back and front; the dust flies.*

[3]*Pyramus crosses to Theseus at R C.*

Quince is much disconcerted at this liberty.

[4]*Thisbe speaks in a man's voice, but on being interrupted by Quince and Bottom, squeaks.*

[5]*Wall is between Pyramus and Thisbe all the time.*

[6]*He takes off his helmet and drops shield and sword to take wall's chink.*

[7]*Each actor seizes the chink as he speaks, grabbing it from the other actor's hands. Wall uses right hand separating first two fingers.*

Show me thy chink, to blink through with
mine eyne! [*Wall holds up his fingers.*
Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well
for this!
But[1] what see I? No Thisbe do I see.
O[2] wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyr.[3] No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisby's cue; she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter THISBE *up L, goes L C.*

This. L C.[4] O wall, full often hast thou
heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.[5]

Pyr. R C. I see a voice:[6] now will I to the
chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face.
Thisbe![7] *L.*

This. My love thou art, my love I think.

[1]*Each time they say Ninny's tomb.*
Quince corrects it to Ninus' tomb.

Thisbe goes off first, then Quince motions Pyramus to follow. He has to pick up helmet, etc., and go off in an undignified manner. The Wall hops off after his speech. All the others laugh.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

This. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

This. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb[1] meet me straightway?

This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay. [*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*

Wall. Thus have I, Wall my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.
[*Exit hopping.*

The. Now is the wall down between the two neighbours.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

[1]*Lion creeps on; Moonshine is very old and totters on with lantern, bush, and dog (wooden).*

[2]*He gets up and wants to take off the head. Quince pushes him down each time.*

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

[1]*Enter* LION *and* MOONSHINE (*Cross go down C*).

Lion. C. You, ladies, you, whose gentle
hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps
on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble
here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am[2]
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;[2]
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 't were pity on my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Moon. C. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present; —

[1]*Moonshine, being a dignified old gent, does not appreciate these interpolations, and gets quite angry.*

[2]*He holds a wooden dog up in the air.*

[3]*Thisbe runs round Moonshine several times as if he were the tomb. Snug squeaks.*

[4]*Quince calls out "Ninus tomb," correctingly.*

[5]*She runs round with the lion after her, drops her red drapery, the lion picks it up, shakes it and upsets the Moon, who falls, putting out the light. Pyramus objects, and, having no moon, he throws down sword and shield and is resigning the part, and quitting when all the ladies and gentlemen surround him and beg him to finish; he agrees to do so. Moonshine feebly holds up an empty lantern.*

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

Moon.[1] This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' th' moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' th' moon?

Hip. I am weary of this moon: would he would change!

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog,[2] my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for they are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Enter THISBE (*running*).[3]

This. This is old Ninny's tomb.[4] Where is my love?

Lion. (*Roaring.*) Oh ——[5]

(*After several roars Thisbe runs off.*)

Dem. Well roar'd, Lion.

[1]*Picks up red mantle.*
[2]*This in old tragic style.*

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

[*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*

The. Well mous'd, Lion.

Lys. And so the lion vanish'd.

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisbe sight.
But stay, O spite!
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,[1]
What, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell![2]
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;

[1]*A very big O here.*

[2]*Quince says "no, no."*

Pyramus then adds "which was."

[3]*He has not got the sword; it is hidden on the ground. He goes around asking for the sword; his audience points to it; he eventually gets it handed to him by Quince.*

[4]*He stabs himself on the right. Quince corrects him to try left.*

[5]*Thus, thus, thus, he drags sword out.*

[6]*He asks Quince if he is dead, and fled, and in the sky. Dies to music.*

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

The. This passion and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyr. O[1] wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is — no, no[2] — which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound[3]
The pap of Pyramus;[4]
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:
[*Stabs himself.*
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.[5]
Now am I dead?
Now am I fled?[6]
My soul *is* in the sky?
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon, take thy flight:
[*Exit Moonshine.*
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

[1]*Thisbe enters distraught and takes tragic paces down stage; stoops down and listens for a heart throb.*

[2]*Music through Thisbe's lament.*

The sword is again lost; when Thisbe goes around distracted. Her friends point to it underneath Pyramus; she has to arouse him to get it.

Pyramus objects to return to life; eventually he hands Thisbe the sword.

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE from up L.[1]

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

This. Asleep, my love?
What, dead,[2] my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.

[1]*She dies alongside of Pyramus. A slight pause for the King and Queen to recover themselves.*

[2]*Bottom jumps up and goes to Theseus. All the other actors have reappeared at Thisbe's death; they all come down in a line behind Bottom, bobbing as he bobs.*

[3]*This is the "Clown's Dance" of Mendelssohn. It should be simple, each actor doing the same thing after the Greek fashion. It is really a march movement. They dance off up L. All rise as Theseus rises. All go off following Theseus and Hippolyta up steps and off L and right. Torch-bearers go last so that the lights glimmer and fade away. A pause as if all were still. Then enter very stealthily, Puck with the broom — he listens right and left before speaking.*

Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;[1]
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:
[*Stabs herself.*
And, farewell, friends;
Thus, Thisbe ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu.
[*Dies.*

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. (*Starting up.*) No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers.[2] Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone.

[*A dance.*[3]

The iron tongue of midnight hath struck twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn

As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,

[1]*Sweeps up and down stage with broom.*

[2]*This entrance should be absolutely noiseless.*

[3]*Lights to be raised slightly. They gradually increase as scene proceeds, but moonlight and fairy light, all the time.*

Note.— In the open air the play may end at the general exit after play scene. It is inadvisable to make plays longer than ninety minutes or thereabout in the open.

In the theatre these final fairy scenes, of course, are most beautiful.

The beautiful chorus and dance. "Through the house glimmering light" should be given if possible.

[4]*Music accompanies all this dialogue.*

Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,[1]
To sweep the dust behind the door.
Enter OBERON *and* TITANIA *with their train.*[2]
[*Soft music.*

Obe. C. Though the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire,[3]
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

Tita. C. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note:
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.
[*Song and dance.*

Obe. Now, until the break of day,[4]
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
With this field-dew consecrate,

[1]*They go off whispering in chorus "Trip away, make no stay, meet me all at break of day."*

Note.— The Fairies like the mortals should be in white for this last scene. All kinds of effects can be used. The pillars can become like blazes of light and the Fairies can dance up and down the steps like a continual ascending and descending; till they go off in all directions. The last thing seen is the figure of Puck standing in darkness at top of steps.

Costumes should be all purely Greek.

Theseus: As a soldier in armour. In last act all white.

Hippolyta: As a huntress in red and skins. In last act in white, with perhaps a golden drapery.

Egeus: In gray.

Philostrate: Modified from Theseus.

Lysander: Perhaps purple and green.

Demetrius: Red and purple or red.

Helena: Blue shades.

Hermia: Amber and brown.

All white for last scene. The Clowns in rough browns, blues, grays, etc. Bottom should be brown, Oberon gold, Titania silver.

Other fairies as flowers, herbs, etc., all white for last act.

Puck brown or red, impish, not pretty.

Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and train.*[1]

THE END

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